

## Setting Up a Composting Worm Box...

A few things to know about worms.

- They are sensitive to extremes; temperature, light, pH, and moisture.
  - \* Temperatures should be about 56 to 72 degrees F
  - \* 'Dark' is the way worms like it! After all they do live underground.
  - \* Worms breathe through their skin and they must be moist to accomplish this. However, they can also be drowned in standing water. Keep their environment moist but never wet with sitting water.
- Worms are '*decomposers*'. They will make a meal of most vegetable matter; kitchen peelings, wilted lettuce, Over-ripe apples, banana peels, coffee grounds, and shredded newspaper to name a few.
- Avoid meat, fatty foods, dairy products and acidic fruits such as lemon and orange peels.
- Do not overfeed as this can attract fruit flies to the box; about one time per week is usually good. Be sure to cover food with shredded newspaper after each feeding.



Rubber tubs make a good worm box. Size is your preference but not too large as it will be hard to handle when you need to empty it. Drill 1/8" holes through out the lid for ventilation.



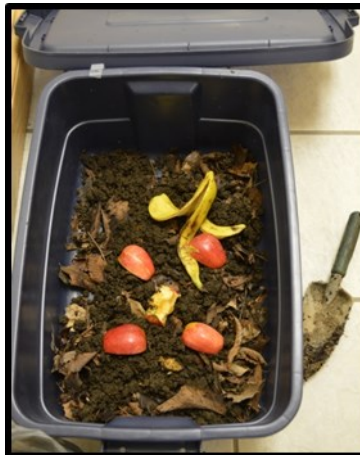
Place about 1/2 lb. composting worms with rich compost soil in the bottom of the box. 'red wigglers' or composting worms are a non-native species that does well in confined spaces. Do not release these worms to the wild.



Mix in a generous amount of 'leaf litter', a mix of rich ground cover from a near-by wooded area or a well composted garden. Fill to a depth of about 2-3"



Stir it well to distribute the worms into the leaf litter. Distribute this mix evenly across the bottom of the box. Add a little moisture if the litter is dry to start.



Feed the worms. Begin with only a small amount. Quantity can increase as the worm population increases.



Finish with a generous layer of shredded newspaper. Don't use glossy magazines or print paper as the worms are not keen on the chemicals used to make these products. Replace the lid and keep covered to keep the worms in the dark. Keep an eye on the moisture. If moisture is needed it is best added with a moist choice of food. Draw off any excess of water.